

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 06228 042306Z

64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /051 W

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R 041545Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6167

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PE

SUBJECT: PODESTA NAMED NEW AIR MINISTER

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON AUGUST 1, AIR MINISTER LIEUT. GENERAL ROLANDO GILARDI ANNOUNCED HE WOULD BE REPLACED ON SEPTEMBER 1 BY LIEUT. GENERAL CESAR PODESTA JIMENEZ, WHO IS CURRENTLY THE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF. GILARDI REACHES THE MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE FOR HIS RANK ON AUGUST 31.

2. COMMENT: PODESTA, A CLOSE FRIEND AND PROTEGE OF GILARDI'S IS NOT THOUGHT TO BE FAVORED BY VELASCO. NOR IS HE PARTICULARLY HIGHLY REGARDED BY AIR FORCE REGULARS, WHO SEE HIM AS A WARM-HEARTED BUT SOMEWHAT WEAK AND INDECISIVE LEADER. NONETHELESS, AS THE NEXT SENIOR AIR FORCE OFFICER HE HAS BROAD SUPPORT AS GILARDI'S LEGITIMATE SUCCESSOR. PODESTA IS SCHEDULED TO RETIRE ON AUGUST 3, 1976.

3. THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS PODESTA ANTI-COMMUNIST AND PROBABLY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. BUT SINCE HE IS NOT A STRONG LEADER, HIS DECISIONS MAY BE HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY THE POLITICAL LEANINGS OF OTHER CABINET MINISTERS.

4. GILARDI, WHO WILL BE 55 WHEN HE STEPS DOWN, IS NOT KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED ANOTHER POSITION IN THE GOP. THE EMBASSY'S AIR ATTACHE ASKED HIM RECENTLY IF HE WERE BEING CONSIDERED TO REPLACE ARCE AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. GILARDI DID NOT DENY THAT THIS MIGHT

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BE A POSSIBILITY AND SAID HE WOULD LIKE THE JOB IF IT WERE OFFERED.

DEAN

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Message Attributes

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